

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 190 956

CG 014 603

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TITLE The Relation of Anglo- and Mexican-American  
Children's Locus of Control Beliefs to Parents' and  
Teachers' Socialization Practices.  
PUB DATE 80  
NOTE 19p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the  
Western Psychological Association (60th, Honolulu,  
HI, May 5-9, 1980).  
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS \*Anglo Americans; Child Development; Children;  
Comparative Analysis; Cultural Differences;  
Elementary Education; Elementary School Students;  
\*Locus of Control; \*Mexican Americans; \*Parent  
Influence; \*Socialization; \*Teacher Influence

## ABSTRACT

Studies in the area of locus of control have tended to neglect the familial antecedents of this variable, particularly among ethnic minorities, and to overlook the role of teachers in the development of children's locus of control beliefs. Moreover, studies have not examined the simultaneous contribution of parents' and teachers' socialization behavior to children's locus of control scores. The relationship of the locus of control orientations of Mexican- and Anglo-American children were examined to compare their descriptions of their mothers', fathers', and teachers' socialization practices. Results showed significant variations in the relation of parents' and teachers' socialization behaviors to children's locus of control scores as a function of both children's and adults' sex and ethnicity, as well as the nature of the locus of control dimension. In addition, teachers' socialization behavior showed a more pervasive relation to children's locus of control scores than parental behavior. (Author)

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ED190956

THE RELATION OF ANGLO- AND MEXICAN-AMERICAN CHILDREN'S LOCUS OF CONTROL  
BELIEFS TO PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' SOCIALIZATION PRACTICES

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Running Head: Locus of Control and Socialization

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THE RELATION OF ANGLO- AND MEXICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN'S LOCUS OF CONTROL  
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Despite a tremendous amount of research involving locus of control there is relatively little data regarding the developmental antecedents of this important psychological variable. The scarcity of developmental research on locus of control is especially acute among ethnic minorities, particularly Mexican Americans. A related area of research that has also been neglected for both Anglo- and Mexican Americans concerns the relationship of teachers' classroom behavior to children's locus of control beliefs. With rare exception (de Charms, 1976; Reimanis, Note 1) studies have overlooked teachers as a possible source of influence on children's locus of control orientations. In addition, previous studies have not simultaneously examined the relationship of both parents' and teachers' socialization practices to children's locus of control beliefs.

The present investigation examines how the locus of control scores of Mexican- and Anglo American children are related to their descriptions of their mothers', fathers' and teachers' socialization practices.

Only a handful of studies have investigated the parental antecedents of locus of control among young children. In the earliest of these studies Chance (Note 2) found mothers' expectations for early independence and permissiveness to be positively related to their sons' feelings of internal control. Shore (Note 3) also reported that noncontrolling, warm and accepting parents had boys who were more internally controlled. A widely cited study by Katkovsky, Crandall, and Good (1967) found children's beliefs in internal control associated with maternal nurturance, protectiveness, affectionateness, and approval. However, for girls only, parental rejection and paternal

affection resulted in stronger feelings of inability to control reinforcements. In the only study with minority children (Solomon, Houlihan, Busse, & Parelus, 1971), Black fathers' hostility and encouragement of independent achievement efforts were both positively related to sons' feelings of internal control.

Studies with college students report greater variability in the familial antecedents of locus of control as a function of both children's and parents' sex. Thus, less parental control (Davis & Phares, 1969) and greater maternal consistency of expectations and achievement pressures were related to internality for both males and females (MacDonald, 1971), while maternal instrumental behavior and paternal physical punishment were related to feelings of internal control for males only (MacDonald, 1971). Conversely, external college students of both sexes perceived their mothers as more protective, inclined to use deprivation of privileges and, in the cases of males only, more prone to use affective punishment (Levenson, 1973; MacDonald, 1971).

Although much has been written about fatalism as being a cultural characteristic of Mexican Americans, there are no developmental studies bearing directly on this issue. However, indirect evidence from childrearing studies suggests that aspects of Mexican American culture may actually promote the development of an internal locus of control. Thus, Durrett, O'Bryant, and Pennebaker (1975) found that, in contrast to Blacks and Anglo Americans, Mexican American parents scored higher in protectiveness and consistency in administration of rewards and punishments. Also, LeVine and Bartz (1979) found that Mexican American parents pressed for earlier assumption of responsibility than Anglo Americans. Finally, Cain (1971) reported that Mexican American children perceived their parents as being significantly more loving and protecting than neglecting and rejecting.

Nevertheless, while the importance of these parental behaviors for promoting internal control among Anglo Americans has already been determined, their relevance for Mexican Americans remains unestablished.

It is frequently assumed that children's locus of control beliefs are exclusively a function of their early socialization experiences at home. However, with entry into school, teachers become an important new socialization agent in children's lives. It seems likely therefore that teachers' classroom behavior may also influence children's perceptions of internal control, especially for achievement related activities. To date only two studies (Reimanis, Note 1; de Charms, 1976) have examined the influence of teachers on students' locus of control beliefs. The results of those studies showed that students experienced greater feelings of internal control as teachers' behavior became more positive and rewarding. Like the area of parental antecedents, the relationship of teachers' classroom behavior to children's locus of control beliefs has not been examined for Mexican Americans.

### Method

#### Subjects

A total of 112 children including 44 Mexican Americans (20 girls; 24 boys) and 68 Anglo Americans (34 girls; 34 boys) participated as subjects in the present study. Subjects were drawn from fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms of three schools from the same suburban community in southern California. The classrooms included two fourth, two fifth, and one fourth-fifth grade combination. Subjects of both ethnic groups were between the ages of 9 and 11 years and there was no significant difference in the mean ages of Anglo- and Mexican American children.

The three schools used in this study were carefully selected in order

to insure a socioeconomically matched sample of Anglo- and Mexican American students. This selection procedure proved successful. Family income data provided by approximately three-fourths of the subjects' parents of each ethnic group indicated no significant difference (Mann-Whitney U-test) in the annual family incomes of Anglo- and Mexican Americans. The median family incomes of Anglo- and Mexican Americans were \$10,100 and \$9,900 respectively. There was substantial variability in family incomes, with some parents of both groups reporting incomes of less than \$4,000 a year while others reported earnings in excess of \$16,000 a year. In general, though, the majority of children came from lower socioeconomic homes.

Mexican American students were in the minority in all three schools and were either second- or third-generation. Many of these children were bilingual to some extent although English was their dominant language. All children participating in the study (both Anglo- and Mexican American) came from intact families with both parents present at home. Only those children meeting this criterion and who in addition were present in class since the beginning of the school year were included as subjects. Data were collected at approximately the middle of the school year.

#### Measures and Procedures

Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire. All subjects were administered the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility (IAR) questionnaire (Crandall, Katkovsky, & Crandall, 1965) which measures children's beliefs about internal vs. external control of reinforcements in achievement related tasks and situations. The IAR yields two subscores, one for belief in internal control or responsibility for successes (I+) and another for belief in internal control or responsibility for failures (I-). The two

subscores may be summed to produce a total index of internal control. For purposes of the present study, I+ and I- were each used separately and not summed since the two subscores were only modestly incorrelated for both groups ( $r = .23$ , Anglo Americans;  $r = .34$ , Mexican Americans) and thus for the most part were providing independent information about these students' locus of control beliefs. Higher scores on both the I+ and I- subscales indicate greater internality. The IAR was group administered and all items read aloud to compensate for differences in children's reading ability.

Perceived Parental and Teacher Socialization Practices. The Cornell Parent Behavior Inventory (CPBI), developed by Devereux and his associates (Devereux, Bronfenbrenner, & Suci, 1962; Devereux, Bronfenbrenner, & Rodgers, 1969), was used to elicit children's perceptions of their parents' and teachers' socialization practices. The CPBI is a 30 item measure designed to provide data on four global socialization dimensions: demanding, supporting, controlling, and punishing. The demanding dimension contains two subscales: prescription of responsibility, and achievement demands. The supporting dimension contains items representing seven subscales: nurturance, principled discipline, instrumental companionship, consistency of expectations, encouragement of autonomy, indulgence, and praise. The punishing dimension contains four subscales: affective punishment, deprivation of privileges, scolding, and physical punishment. The controlling dimension contains only a protectiveness subscale. Subjects respond to each of the 30 items by describing, on a five point scale, the behavior of their parents and teachers during the past year. Higher scores indicate greater amounts of the behavior being described. Children completed the CPBI three times: once describing their

mothers, once their fathers, and once their teachers. Only minor wording revisions of appropriate pronouns are necessary to make the CPBI applicable to the behaviors of mothers, fathers, and teachers. This instrument has been used successfully as a measure of teachers' behavior in previous research (Devereux, Shouval, Bronfenbrenner, Rodgers, Kav-Venaki, Kiely, & Karson, 1974). Mother and father versions of the CPBI were administered two weeks apart; children answered the teacher version one month later while teachers were out of the classroom. Teachers were unaware that the CPBI would be used to describe their own behavior until just prior to its administration. The CPBI was group administered and all items read aloud to the class. All testing was done by the same Mexican American male researcher.

The CPBI was chosen as the measure of socialization in this study because (a) previous research indicates that children's perceptions of their parents' socialization practices are more strongly related to their own perceptions of control than parents' own childrearing reports (Lefcourt, 1972, 1976), and (b) because versions of this instrument have been used successfully in studies of the familial antecedents of students' locus of control scores (MacDonald, 1971; Levenson, 1973). Moreover, children's reports of parental behaviors have been found to be significantly related to independently observed parental behaviors and parental reports of their own behaviors (Mussen & Distler, 1960; Mussen & Rutherford, 1963; Katkovsky et al., 1967; Devereux et al., 1969).

Teachers whose classrooms were used in this study were Anglo American and included three females and two males. All had taught at their present grade levels and respective schools for over five years.

### Method of Analysis

Analysis of variance using multiple regression procedures was used as the method of analysis due to the unequal number of subjects in cells and in order to test the significance of the contribution made to locus of control by the interaction of categorical variables with the continuous socialization variables of the CPBI. Preliminary analyses revealed no significant effects of grade level and therefore this variable was not included as a factor in the analyses reported here.

Data for mothers, fathers, and teachers were analyzed separately. Two sets of analyses were performed on these data; once with I+ as the dependent variable and another with I- as the dependent variable. Independent variables in the analyses of variance design were subjects' Sex, Ethnicity, and each of the four Perceived Behavior dimensions of the CPBI. Because of low to moderate intercorrelations among the parent and teacher behavior variables, tests of significance are not completely independent.

Previous analyses show no significant ethnic differences in parents' and teachers' socialization behavior nor in children's IAR scores. Also, in both ethnic groups, boys report greater parental punishment and more controlling teacher behavior than girls. These results and their implications are discussed elsewhere (Buriel, Note 4).

### Results

Maternal behavior. Results of the four analyses relating mothers' behavior to children's I+ scores reveal significant main effects for the Demanding,  $F(1,104) = 4.82$ ,  $p < .05$ , and Supporting,  $F(1,104) = 4.45$ ,  $p < .05$ , socialization dimensions. Internal control for success is positively related to maternal demandingness ( $B = .20$ ) and support ( $B = .20$ )

for all children. There are no other significant findings for this set of analyses. Results of the analyses relating maternal behaviors to children's I- scores reveal no significant main effects or interactions.

Paternal behaviors. Results for fathers' data show no significant main effects for any of the four analyses involving children's I+ scores. There are, however, two significant interactions: Demanding X Ethnicity,  $F(1,104) = 4.44$ ,  $p < .05$ , and Supporting X Sex,  $F(1,104) = 4.21$ ,  $p < .05$ . Paternal demandingness is positively related to internal control for success for Mexican American children ( $B = .34$ ) but not Anglo American children ( $B = -.008$ ), while paternal support is positively related to internal control for success for boys ( $B = .16$ ) but not girls ( $B = .01$ ). There are no other significant findings for this set of analyses. Consistent with the results for mothers, fathers' socialization behaviors show no significant relationship to children's I- scores.

Teachers' behaviors. Results of the analyses relating teachers' behavior to children's I+ scores reveal a significant main effect for the Demanding dimension,  $F(1,104) = 5.30$ ,  $p < .05$  and a significant Controlling X Ethnicity interaction,  $F(1,104) = 4.88$ ,  $p < .05$ . Teachers' demanding behavior contributes positively ( $B = .27$ ) to children's perceptions of internal control for success while teachers' controlling behavior is positively related to internal control for success among Mexican American children ( $B = .40$ ) but not Anglo American children ( $B = -.02$ ). There are no other significant findings for this set of analyses. There are no significant main effects for the analyses relating teachers' behavior to children's I- scores. However, two significant interactions do appear: Demanding X Sex,  $F(1,104) = 6.15$ ,  $p < .05$ , and Support X Ethnicity,

$F(1,104) = 4.16, p < .05$ . Teachers' demanding behavior is positively related to internal control for failure for boys ( $B = .21$ ) but negatively related to internal control for failure for girls ( $B = -.23$ ). Also, teachers' supporting behavior contributes positively to the perception of internal control for failure for Mexican American children ( $B = .42$ ) but not Anglo American children ( $B = -.04$ ). There are no other significant findings.

### Discussion

Results show significant variations in the relation of parents' and teachers' socialization behaviors to children's locus of control scores. These relationships vary as a function of both children's and adults' sex and ethnicity as well as the nature (I+ or I-) of the locus of control dimension being considered.

The findings for parents showed that for both ethnic groups, maternal support was positively related to internal control for success for all children, while paternal support was positively related to this same locus of control dimension for boys only. Two interrelated processes may account for the sex-related nature of the relationship between parental support and children's locus of control for success. First, as primary socialization agents for children of both sexes, mothers' supporting behavior may have an equal effect on the development of both boys' and girls' locus of control beliefs. Secondly, boys' identification with their fathers may increase the importance of paternal support for the development of boys' internal control. The effects of a similar identification process between mothers and daughters may be offset by the effects of the supporting behavior that mothers, as primary socialization agents, express toward children of both sexes.

Mothers' demanding behavior was also positively related to internal control for success for children of both ethnic groups. The demanding dimension of the CPBI is defined by a press for achievement and assumption of responsibility. Results for mothers are therefore consistent with previous studies (Chance, Note 2; Davis & Phares, 1969) which show greater internal control among children with achievement-oriented mothers. In contrast to findings for mothers, fathers' demanding behavior was positively related to internal control for success among Mexican American children only. The greater status and respect accorded fathers in Mexican American families (Murillo, 1971; Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974) may impart greater psychological importance to their demands for achievement and responsibility than in Anglo American families. Consequently, Mexican American children with demanding fathers may make a stronger effort to comply with their fathers' press for achievement and responsibility and thereby experience greater opportunities for learning internal control.

Surprisingly, neither punishing nor controlling parental behavior was related to locus of control for either cultural group. In addition, not a single dimension of parental socialization behavior was related to children's locus of control for failure. Since relationships between these particular parental and locus of control variables have been observed in previous research, their absence here may be due to socioeconomic differences between subjects in the present investigation and those used in earlier studies. Thus in contrast to previous research which has relied primarily on middle class children and adults as subjects, the present investigation drew subjects from primarily lower class backgrounds. Perhaps to compensate for the greater economic and social constraints against success experienced by

members of the lower class, parents of this group stress personal responsibility for achievements over responsibility for failures in the course of their children's socialization. In addition, controlling and punishing parental behavior may be interpreted differently by lower class children, thus altering the usual relationship of locus of control to these socialization dimensions.

The results for teachers were more far reaching and complex than the findings for parents. Consistent with their role of encouraging students to develop their achievement related skills, teachers' demanding behavior was positively related to internal control for success for all children. Teachers' demanding behavior was also positively related to internal control for failure for boys, but negatively related to this same locus of control dimension for girls. Research on sex differences in children's learned helplessness suggests a possible explanation for this finding. Teachers may perceive that internal attributions for failure lead to a greater deterioration in performance for girls than boys (Dweck, & Reppucci, 1973), and attempt to compensate for this by emphasizing the role of internal and external causes of failure differently for boys and girls. Thus the content of teachers' achievement-related demands to girls, in contrast to boys, may convey the suggestion that failures are due primarily to external causation. On the other hand, teachers' achievement related demands may stress the role of internal causality for success equally for boys and girls. Eventually, students may internalize the ascribed causes of success and failure embodied in their teachers' achievement related demands and use them to explain their own achievement-related outcomes.

For Mexican American children only, a positive relationship was observed between teachers' controlling behavior and internal control for success, and

teachers supporting behavior and internal control for failure. These findings are consistent with the theoretical formulations of Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) who argue that Mexican American children derive greater academic benefits (in this case an internal locus of control) from teaching styles that are supportive and which set clearly defined norms of classroom behavior or control. A structured and supportive teaching style may make Mexican American children feel more secure about assuming internal responsibility for their achievement related successes and failures.

The perceived classroom behavior of teachers showed a more pervasive relationship to the locus of control beliefs of Mexican American children than of Anglo American children. This suggests the possibility that teachers' socialization behavior may be a more potent source of influence on the development of achievement related skills for Mexican American children. Mayeske (1968) reached a similar conclusion. His re-analysis of the Coleman Report data found that teachers played a more important role in the achievement of Mexican American children than of Anglo American children.

An important assumption of the present investigation is that teachers' classroom behavior is an antecedent rather than a consequence of children's locus of control beliefs. Although conclusive evidence is lacking, this assumption seems tenable since previous research (Reimanis, Note 1; de Charms, 1976) has shown that students' locus of control beliefs change in response to changes in teachers' classroom behavior. In addition, teachers' socialization behavior was more consistently related to children's locus of control scores than parental behavior which is consistent with the hypothesis that teachers should be especially instrumental in the development of children's

beliefs concerning the causes of their successes and failures in achievement related activities.

In sum, results of the present investigation indicate the importance of conceptualizing children's locus of control beliefs for achievement related activities as a function of both parents' and teachers' socialization practices. In addition, the findings demonstrate the culturally relevant nature of the relationship between socialization practices and locus of control for Anglo- and Mexican American children.

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